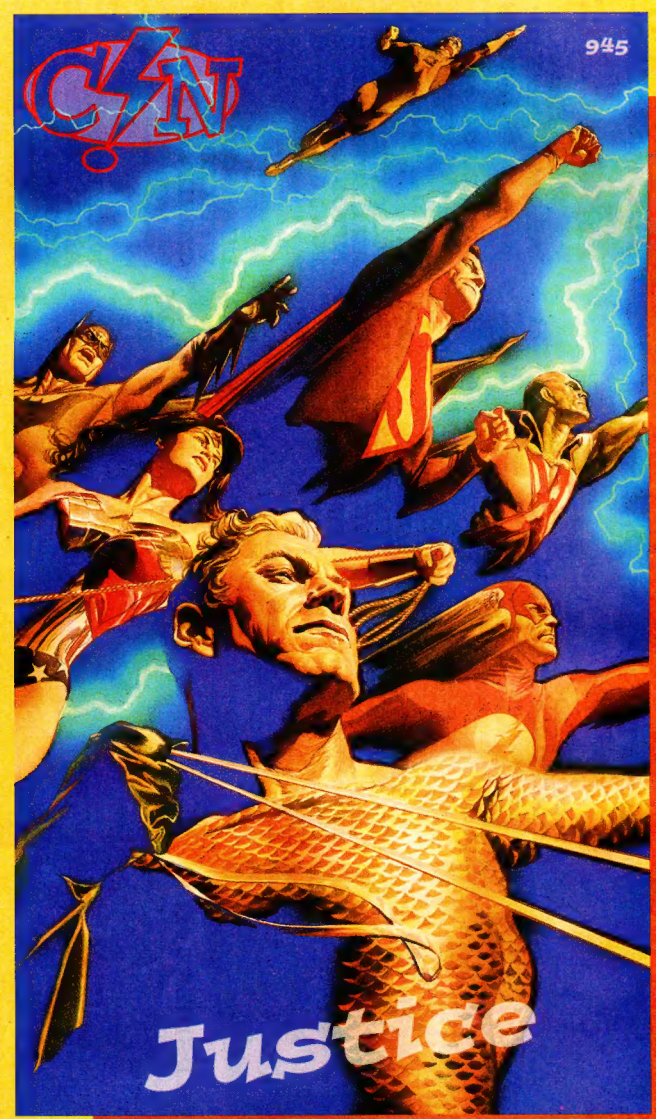
CAN
Justice

And Justice For All!...

Next month, the skies over the DCU will fill with heroes, villains, and just about everyone in between, courtesy of ***Justice***, the twelve issue bimonthly series by *Alex Ross, Jim Krueger & Doug Braithwaite*. The project is a reunion for the trio, who had collaborated on various ***Earth X*** projects at Marvel; however, where those projects took place in an alternate reality, ***Justice*** is a quintessential DC series that depicts the company's most iconic heroes doing what they do best—combating evil in protection of their world in a story that Ross describes as "superhuman war. *The* superhuman war."

While most know Ross as the pre-eminent painter in the comic book field, this story allows him to flex his writing muscles as well; he's co-plotting the series with *Jim Krueger* as well as supplying painted finishes over *Doug Braithwaite's* pencil art, resulting in a book that seems familiar to Ross's many fans, but at the same time displays a different look from anything he's done before.

Is ***Justice*** in effect a followup to the megahit ***JLA: Truth & Justice*** treasury-sized book that Ross produced with writer *Paul Dini* in 2003? "Kinda," Ross said We basically did your classic seemingly never-changing lineup of JLA members from the Silver Age—which I count as going into the '70s by a fair bit. In this thing, we're picking up with the greatest lineup of Silver Age villains against the greatest lineup of Silver Age heroes. It's the creative extension of the things that I've always wanted to do, but had never really found the right moment to do them in."

Why did he not tackle the project before now? "I wanted to break away from [superhero/superhuman wars] after ***Kingdom Come***, to focus on the inherent, intrinsic value of these individual icons as superheroes, which is what led to the Treasury books with Paul. That built up all the way to ***JLA***, where once I was doing that many characters again, I caught the desire to do a regular superhero story. Finally, I can give people what I can end up feeling that they want from me, which is a comic book much closer to something like ***Kingdom Come***... the all-out fight, many more characters, and many more elements where I'm touching upon continuity that you recognize with the iconic characters.

"For instance, there was no Marvel family in the Shazam book I did. There was no Lois or Jimmy in the Superman book. You're getting all that plus more in this – you're getting all those extended kind of characters making their appearances throughout this – some greater than others, obviously, but the idea is that the Justice League's lives are not finite to just that grouping, but also include all the people they're involved with."

Justice will involve "everyone. From Robin with Batman to the Teen Titans, and more. You'll see all of that touched upon throughout the course of the series. In my hands though, 'continuity' is going to mean: this is what I grew up knowing, and this is what, arguably, a huge percentage of the reading populace knows – in other terms, the old fart audience," Ross joked.

"I *do* love continuity in part, but I find it completely frustrating to try and find my way into it and become a part of it. I could never make it work with either publisher to get close enough to it. You've got different hands working on different pieces. Say, you're *Grant Morrison*, and you just took over ***Justice League***. You put the classic team back together. Superman is a key figure in that team, and a key part of your stories. One year in, you get the call and DC tells you Superman is blue and electric – make it work with your plan.

"That's the kind of aggravating thing that I guess I'm too uptight to work with. So, as a result, I become less willing to compromise in that way, and opt for the classic takes on the characters and I'll do my thing somewhere set apart from the larger universe."

"Dick Grayson is Robin in this, and there are no other Teen Titans, save the originals: Wonder Girl, Aqua Lad, Speedy, Kid Flash. That doesn't mean I don't love the Perez/Wolfman ones, but that's just a different age...."

"In a way, ***Justice*** is capturing a purity of a specific time period that happens to coincide with my youth, and that of others, before it was destroyed, and the DCU moved on."

How does Shazam fit into the story, since he wasn't a part of this quintessential JLA? "Well, he obviously wasn't a member of the Justice League, but expanded on that level of DC icons, I want him to be very much in the middle of this, and to show a synthesis of all these important worlds of DC's ownership. It's just like with Plastic Man – he'll come in and play an important role as well... It's meant to be this very thought-out story that's taking the ramifications of what a lot of what these heroes and villains can do very seriously, so that for each moment you're soaking them in, the story is adding a new level of their complexity or their deadliness – and also establishing some of their lives in this, too."

How difficult was it to pack something that iconic and far-reaching into twelve issues? "As it was, I was finishing up work on my Justice League book when I first started talking with *Dan DiDio* about the idea of a Justice League comic book that could be a series. Something with the classic JLA, so, in a way to satisfy those consumers of DC products who want those characters... I felt that the JLA book ***Liberty and Justice*** led in nicely to something just called ***Justice***.

"I talked up the idea of bringing over the ***Paradise X*** creative team, because we were finishing that up simultaneously at Marvel, and I thought it would be wonderful to keep things going, from working on the story with Jim to having Doug involved, perhaps even more than he was in the Marvel projects.

"There was initial interest from Dan – and this was long before the ***All Star*** line had been conceived or talked about, so, in its infancy, I would've been doing my typical ***Earth X*** thing, which would have been covers, designs, and co-plotting, but not really treating it as my baby... but when I hit upon the idea of what a series like this could do – telling of the ultimate superhero battle of the Legion of Doom versus the Justice League—I realized that I *really* wanted to be involved with the day to day proceedings of the artwork.

"Knowing that it would be such a long series, the idea of combining my stuff with Doug's stood out as a really exciting prospect of something that I'd never tried before. I got really psyched about the whole thing – I could keep my hand in, and it will look like my work but with a slight difference when it's all said and done. Honestly, I feel like the largest back-breaking effort is on Dougie's head at this point... That said, I'm *thrilled* when I get the pages, and it's clear that Doug has put all this insane effort into them. This way, I can concentrate on color and painting, and expand that part of myself, as well as go in and tweak elements so everything looks consistent."

In addition to collaborating artistically, Ross is also collaborating on the story with co-writer *Jim Krueger*. How does that collaborative process work? "Jim has produced an outline for the series as a whole, based on our lengthy conversations and going over details in meticulous fashion. I give him additional notes based on that, and then, once he's written a script for a particular issue, I give him copious notes on everything that I felt needed to be covered. Usually, we have a long list of those things, so they're already down for him to attend to. I might disagree with him, for example, on how he conveyed one or some of those things, so we'll talk some more, and maybe some more changes will be made to find the middle ground between the two of us. Finally, we get to the final draft, it goes to the editor, and then, of course, we get some more notes that change things again, and then it gets to Doug."

DC editor *Mike Carlin* once said that he thought every creator had at least one great JLA story to tell—does Ross see ***Justice*** as his? "My God, I hope so, but knowing me, I'm such a lifelong fan; I'll probably never get it out of my system completely. I can at least promise that I will take a very long break from doing those characters. It's not like I don't like other things in comics, so it's anyone's guess as to where I'd go next, but you would hope that at that point, I've had my fill of drawing these giant group shots of the JLA. Year after year, I produce those images…but when you love something, that love just lives on and on, so….they'll be there somewhere in the future..."

***Justice* #1**, a $2.99 comic, is scheduled for August 17th release.

by Matt Brady (with Cliff Biggers)

IT'S GONNA BE OKAY, LISA
I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU ARE YOU'LL BE SAFE.
THERE ARE OTHERS WHO NEED MY HELP BEFORE I CAN FIND OUT WHO'S HAPPENED
OH MY GOD! WHAT HAPPENED?

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!
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a bug scan for Digital Comics Preservation

Byron Preiss Dead at 52

Byron Preiss, an influential editor, developer, and publisher who has influenced the fields of comics and popular fiction for three decades, died on July 9th as the result of an automobile accident.

Best known for his company, Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Preiss has developed a variety of comics and comic-related projects (such as the ***Wild Cards*** series, which featured superhero-themed tales complemented by illustrations from a variety of comic book artists). Most recently, Preiss was involved in the launch of iBooks, a publishing venture whose offerings include a variety of graphic novels, including the acclaimed *Joe Kubert* tale ***Yossel.***

Good Book on Vertigo Schedule

A Bible-inspired series from Vertigo? Who'da thunk it?

Before you decide that *Karen Berger* and the editorial staff of Vertigo have radically changed the imprint's focus, let creator *Douglas Rushkoff* explain what his new series ***Testament*** isn't... and what it is.

First off, it *isn't* an adaptation of the Old or New Testaments.

So what is the premise of ***Testament?***

" The premise *of* ***Testament*** and the premise *for* ***Testament*** are two very different things," Rushkoff said. "The premise *of* ***Testament***—at least as much of it as I'm willing to give away at this point—is that we're moving into a new kind of fascism that it has its roots in some very old patterns of thought and behavior.

"***Testament*** takes place in a world that looks very much like ours—except for the fact that corporate interests run the government, the draft is being reinstated, terrorism is being used as a pretext for population control, the media has become a highly controlled propaganda space, all university research is funded in one way or another by military interests, citizens are being tracked by RFID implants, money has become a kind of thought virus that people actually believe in and...wait a minute, that *is* pretty close to the way things really are!

Publisher
Comic Shop News, Inc.

Editors
Cliff Biggers
Ward Batty

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Editorial Office
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
fax (928) 441-5990
cliffbig@comicshopnews.com

Business Office
3577-A Chamblee-Tucker Rd. #215
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 939-1364
fax (678) 669-1525
wbatty@csnsider.com

http://www.csnsider.com

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

"Our main story follows a group of renegades who refuse to submit to the cultural program. They use alchemy, computer networking, media hacking, and a bit of sex magick to see behind the illusions and fight against the powers that mean to eliminate novelty and free will from the human equation.

"What they slowly come to realize, however, is that these battles have been fought before. Each of their trials has a corollary in the narratives described in the Bible. Does this mean the Bible really happened? Or what?

According to DC's description, the book addresses the question "What if the Bible were happening right now?" Does that mean that it follows the framework of the Bible, updating the stories to a contemporary milieu, or is it using the Bible less as a story frame and more as a thematic one?

"This gets to the premise *for* the book. I'm really sick and tired of the Bible being used as a way to shut down thinking and inquiry. It just stinks, and it goes against the very premise of the Bible—which is about weird revolutionaries who fight for autonomy against all sorts of oppression. I can't help but think if any of these people actually *read* the Bible, they'd raise up against their ministers and smite them on the spot.

"So my big slap in the face to these people is to say 'hey, the Bible isn't so important because it happened at some moment in history. The Bible is a big deal because it's happening *now*. In every moment.' Every day, I am Cain, discouraged by the way someone else—some Abel—gets credit and attention for doing the same thing I did. We are still living in a world where the monetary system invented by Joseph and Pharaoh enslaves us in lifetimes of debt, where we lose track of our most core desires and disconnect from our compassion.

"As far as the characters in the comic are concerned, the relationship to Bible develops slowly. I don't want to give too much away or it'll be less fun for everyone. So let me say that I begin by telling parallel stories. Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac becomes a parallel for whether or not Alan Stern will implant his son with an RFID tag so he can be tracked for the military draft. Both are examples of father's sacrificing their sons for false gods.

"And in the telling, I hope to reveal the *real* Bible stories that have been suppressed for so long. Most people think God told Abraham to kill Isaac as some kind of test. If they read the actual Bible and other ancient texts, they'd see that people sacrificed their first sons *all the time*! It was the normal thing to do. There are still remnants of giant altars in Israel with furnaces into which the babies were dropped. What made Abraham unique was not that he was willing to sacrifice his son, but that he was willing *not* to sacrifice his son. But the whole story got changed around during the Crusades, when people were supposed feel okay about sending their kids off to war, or letting their children die rather than being converted. So if people see the real story, it's so much more horrible and exciting, and so much more relevant to what's happening now..."

Is ***Testament*** set in a world where the Bible as such doesn't exist before this series begins? If so, how does this reality differ from ours? If not, then do the characters at any point realize how strangely Biblical some of their experiences are?

"I don't have the vampire problem—you know, where your modern vampire story has to either ignore Dracula completely, or make some reference to it as fictional. Certain characters will become aware that there's something parallel going on. I suppose I already believe there's something parallel going on. To me, it's so very striking in our own reality.

"But yeah, the Bible exists in this world. It's just that it's more than simply a story in a book. It's a narrative that contains everyone. I can't say much more than that without telling the next four or five years of story.

"For continuity, there are the characters of the gods, who live outside the frames of the main stories. In fact, they can't go inside the frames—the frames are occurring in linear time, and the gods live outside it. But the gods will be outside frames from both eras, and will provide a bit of context for the relationship between Bible time and our own.

The star of the series is Jake Stern, a man who definitely does not operate in the world outside our window. "Well, it's not outside our windows exactly, but it's in quite a few garages and basements. I do a little workshop annually at the Omega Institute with the Disinformation folks—artists like *Grant Morrison, Genesis P-Orridge, Paul Laffoley*—and lemme tell you, the people who show up to these events are pretty cyber-alchemic already. It's just a matter of knowing how to cross a few unconventional thresholds, and then navigate the terrain you find there.

"The kids in my comic are a bit more advanced than most practitioners these days. They live in a giant abandoned indoor city swimming pool, and have all sorts of cool equipment to play with. Kind of like a Survival Research Lab meets ***Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*** fantasy. And they can venture a bit more deliberately through the other realms.

"As for the main world of the story itself, I suppose it's basically USofA: the day after tomorrow. The impending economic crash has already happened, the Gulf War has been concluded, fundamentalist Christian doctrine has been institutionalized, and a world anti-terrorist army is being formed under false pretenses."

While ***Testament*** is Rushkoff's first comics work, it's far from his first published work. Rushkoff has found critical and sales success as a writer of both fiction and nonfiction. "I guess I'm best known for writing some books in the early nineties about cyberculture, electronica, the psychedelic revival—that sort of stuff. I just happened to be writing about it earlier than most people, so it put me on the map. I also wrote book called ***Media Virus***, which unintentionally launched the whole 'viral marketing' craze. I meant it as a culture hacking manifesto, but too many advertising executives read it...

"The underlying message and concern in all my work is that people come to recognize that we are creating reality, together. The world we live in is not a creation of some God—some pre-existing condition. It is a living thing. Meaning emerges through our interactions.

"So it's basic 'reality hacking,' with a bias towards empowering people to take up their pens or brushes or computers and begin co-authoring our world.

"I've also made a couple of ***Frontline*** documentaries—'The Merchants of Cool,' about how MTV creates teen culture for them. And 'The Persuaders,' about the way marketers infiltrate more and more of our reality. So I've been working on the same main problems in a number of different ways for quite a while."

Rushkoff has been described as a culture critic; will readers find evidence of that in ***Testament?*** "Totally. The beauty of this series is that I can put what's that's going on in the real world in a great perspective. Just as science fiction helps us see modern issues by playing them out on a fantasy future landscape, a stark, mythological landscape gives me the ability to show the huge repeating dynamics in our cultural obsessions.

"Really, this is the most radical thing I've ever thought to do: showing the Bible as it really is means exposing reality for what it is.

Testament offers Rushkoff an opportunity to address an element of our culture that continues to fascinate and frustrate him: religion. "Religion has become its opposite. Religion is the enemy. Religious institutions today are the very forces actively preventing the essence of Torah—the lifeblood of spirituality—from manifesting in this realm. Religions are the gatekeepers on our awareness. The Bible actually says this. God punishes Adam and Eve for seeking knowledge. Who is this God?...

One of Rushkoff's nonfiction works, ***Nothing Sacred: The Truth About Judaism,*** seems to encourage an analytical, intellectual, questioning, engaged approach to religion; is it safe to say that ***Testament***, while a work of fiction, syncs with that attitude--and

if so, how? "The idea of ***Nothing Sacred*** was that the Bible—and religion—are not set in stone. They are being written as we live... The main point of ***Nothing Sacred*** is that the story is still being written. By us. It's not a closed book, at all. The problem is our ministers and rabbis tend to promote this idea that the Bible is holy and set in stone. That the human story has already been written by God. And we're supposed to sit and wait for judgment day or the messiah or whatever. When the point of these religions—the reason they were invented—was to give people the strength to revolt against their gods, against the idea that the story is already written. To help people cope with the fact that we are in charge of what happens here."

What led Rushkoff to develop ***Testament*** as a comic book rather than a novel? "I'm an on-again-off-again comic book reader. I have these six-month odysseys into the comics world, then I emerge for maybe a year or two. Something or someone always drags me back in again.

"I'm telling this story in comics because it's the safest place for me to do it. I mean, my Jewish book got me blacklisted by a lot of organizations who saw in it a threat to Israel's public relations efforts in America.

"Comic books are still under the radar in some regards. Because of their appeal to 'kids,' many people don't realize how rich their content is. For me, sequential narrative is also a great format in which to tell a story that lives both inside and outside of time. I can have parts of the story happen in frames, and parts of the story happen outside them. Since the deepest theme in my work is really about the relationship between chronos and mythos—historical time and mythological time—it's great to have a medium in which the most interesting things can happen in the spaces between frames rather than in the frames, themselves."

Joining Rushkoff on this series is artist *Liam Sharp*. Did Rushkoff choose the artist, or did Vertigo put the two creators together? "Vertigo found him and put us together—but he'd be my choice for the book. The process of finding an artist was actually a bit arduous. It's a matter of finding someone who has enough time—which usually means they're just coming off a major project. And that means they're tired as hell.

"The visualization of these worlds is particularly complex, and requires someone who can drawn in a number of styles and handle new kinds of layouts. Very inventive stuff. Liam seems born to work on something like this."

Testament, a monthly series from Vertigo/DC, is scheduled to premiere in October.

Make Mine Monsters!

Before they reshaped modern comics with their distinctive take on superheroes, Marvel specialized in monster tales. Such titles as ***Strange Tales, Amazing Fantasy, Tales to Astonish,*** and ***Journey Into Mystery*** were rife with aliens, monsters, extradimensional beings, and other fantastic menaces in those pre-hero days.

And this fall, they're coming back!

The haunting month of October brings the return of several monster-themed projects from Marvel, led by *Keith Giffen & Eduardo Francisco's* ***Howling Commandos.*** This isn't Sgt. Fury's WWII combat team, however; instead, this is a group of real monsters—Living Mummy, Warwolf, Zombie, Glob, Vampire by Night, Clone of Frankenstein,

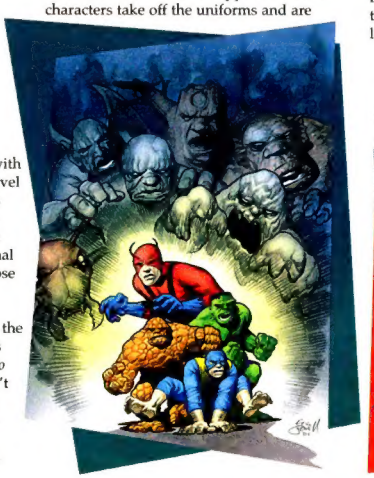
and others—led by Clay Quartermain, the lonely human in charge.

"I've always wanted to do something with the name 'Howling Commandos,'" Giffen told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers*. "I just mentioned how I loved the name Howling Commandos and what a pity it was that the name was going to waste, and to be honest with you, I don't remember exactly who it was that said wouldn't it be neat if it was Marvel monsters. It took on a life of its own from there."

As Giffen explained it, ***Howling Commandos*** came about when "S.H.I.E.L.D. gathered up all of the Marvel monsters to serve as a shock and awe strike force. They will utilize horror and supernatural dread as weapons. There's nothing more effective than dropping a couple of werewolves behind the enemy's front lines and letting them run amok. They sort of soften up the enemy.

"The idea behind the series is to take Tom Clancy operations and extrapolate them into monster terms. Like if you call in air support, in a Tom Clancy novel, it's jets flying overhead dropping bombs. In our book, it's a fire-breathing dragon soaring in."

Giffen is having a wonderful time updating some of Marvel's classic monster characters. "We're just giving a lot of these monsters basic personalities. Like the fact that Zombie is kind of disgusted that people think he's going to eat them. The fact that the Living Mummy, having once been royalty, is just an insufferable snob. I've always been more interested in what happens when the characters take off the uniforms and are together behind the scenes, and it's even more interesting because these guys are monsters."



And this Giffen-helmed re-imagining of ***Howling Commandos*** isn't the only monster project Marvel has slated for October debut. Also coming up are a quartet of monster-inspired titles featuring cover art by ***Goon***-meister *Eric Powell*.

The four monster one-shots include

- ***Devil Dinosaur*** by *Tom Sniegoski, Eric Powell, & Mark Farmer*
- ***Monsters on the Prowl,*** by *Steve Niles & Duncan Fegredo*
- ***Fin Fang Four,*** by *Roger Langridge & Mick Gray*
- ***Where Monsters Dwell,*** an anthology, featuring work by *Jeff Parker, Peter David, Keith Giffen, Russ Braun, & Arnold Pander*

Each book will feature 22 pages of new story and art as well as a classic pre-hero Marvel monster tale by *Stan Lee, Jack Kirby,* and others.

"The Kirby Monsters seem to have a place in just about every creator and retailers' hearts," editor *Mark Paniccia* said. "We thought it would be fun to do something that harkened back to those classics. It was important that this project play off its inherent nostalgic quality, so we even changed the trade dress for this."

The book with the strongest superhero angle is ***Monsters on the Prowl,*** which involves some of Marvel's "monstrous" heroes—the Hulk, the Thing, Beast, and Giant Man. And if that's not enough Hulk for you, the greenskinned one also makes an appearance in ***Devil Dinosaur.***

Marvel's monsters are slated to be unleashed throughout the month of October.

Ins & Outs

Out: ***Superman #219,*** the first installment of the four-part "Sacrifice" story arc that fits in between ***OMAC Project #s 3 & 4,*** sold out of a hefty overprinting in less than a week. No word on a second printing at press-time.

In: ***Demo,*** the *Brian Wood-Becky Cloonan* series published by AiT/PlanetLar, will finally appear in a collected edition later this year. "The vocal fanbase that Brian and Becky had for the book amongst savvy retailers and readers were able to convince me that a collected ***Demo*** was something that they needed. And we're all too happy to give the people what they need."

"Collecting ***Demo*** into a trade is like perfect binding seventeen months of my life together," Becky Cloonan added. "It's the largest and most important body of work I've helped to create, not only because of the comic itself but the people who helped make it, and those I met along the way."

"Personally, ***Demo*** remains one of my most important and treasured projects, one that will continue to influence and impact everything else I do in the future," writer *Brian Wood* said. "It represents a massive leap forward for me, creatively and conceptually."

Look for the collected edition in December.

Out: ***Identity Crisis #1 Final Printing*** has sold out from DC; this makes four sold-out printings of the acclaimed series from 2004—and as the name states, this was the *final* printing, so don't look for another edition. "I'm amazed that this story has had such a life. I couldn't be any more excited," artist *Rags Morales* said. "***Identity Crisis*** is about family—not just wives and husbands, but families of heroes and villains. We'd like to thank everybody for becoming part of DC's family of ideas."

Don't worry if you're one of the few who still hasn't read this compelling series: DC has a hardcover edtiion slated for Setpember release in two versions. The Direct Market version will feature a cover by *Michael Turner,* while the book market version features a cover by Morales—and *both* versions will be available through comic shops. "As for the hardcover collection, this is the comic I always wanted," Morales said. "It gets inside the heads of the creators with art and commentary you're not going to see anywhere else." writer *Brad Meltzer* supplies the commentary, while Morales opens his sketchbook; the collected edition will also feature an introduction by *Joss Whedon*.

Out: ***Girls #1 & 2*** are both out of print at Image; ***Girls #1*** has sold through its first and second printings, as a matter of fact. Image is going back to print on both issues. The third printing of ***Girls #1*** will feature a sketch version of the second printing cover, while the second printing of ***Girls #2*** will feature an all-new cover by *Jonathan Luna*. "Never in our wildest dreams did we imagine a response like this," *Joshua Luna* said, "and with only two issues in, we've really only scratched the surface. Readers can expect some major twists and turns as the book progresses—so if you think things are crazy now, you *definitely* need to see where this story is heading."

Top Two-Dozen for

AEON FLUX #1

Mike Kennedy (W); Timothy Green II (A)
(Dark Horse JUN050021 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
The sexy, deadly sf star graduates from animation to an upcoming feature film—and an original comic!

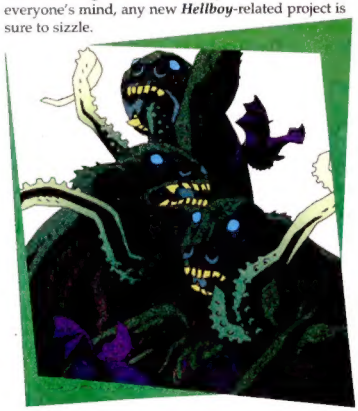
Why Should You Care?
Take Lara Croft, add some futuristic weapons, oodles of action, and an amped-up storyline, and you have film's and comics' newest bad-girl. And you *know* how comics loves those bad girls...

BPRD: THE BLACK FLAME #1

Mike Mignola & John Arcudi (W); Guy Davis (A)
(Dark Horse JUN050014 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Remember that pesky plague of frogs? Well, so do the folks at the Bureau for Paranormal Research & Defense... and they're back on the case in this new limited series.

Why Should You Care?
With *Mike Mignola*'s new ***Hellboy*** series fresh on everyone's mind, any new ***Hellboy***-related project is sure to sizzle.



DETECTIVE COMICS #809

Andersen Gabrych (W); Pete Woods & Bit (A)
(DC JUN050326 $2.99)

BATMAN #643

Bill Willingham (W); Giuseppe Camuncoli & Sandra Hope (A)
(DC JUN050327 $2.50)

DETECTIVE COMICS #810

Andersen Gabrych (W); Pete Woods & Bit (A)
(DC JUN050328 $2.99)

BATMAN #644

Bill Willingham (W); Giuseppe Camuncoli & Sandra Hope (A)
(DC JUN050329 $2.50)

ROBIN #141

Bill Willingham (W); Scott McDaniel & Andy Owens (A)
(DC JUN050336 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
Think you know how last year's "War Games" wrapped up? Well, the ending has yet to be written... but it's coming in August, complete with some high-stakes confrontations, public revelations that threaten Batman's role in Gotham, a startling return (seems to be a lot of those around Gotham recently, doesn't there?), and a few twists that add a different angle to 2004's multi-part Batman saga. The four-part core story runs through ***Batman*** and ***Detective***, while Robin features the rekindling of an old romance... but the object of Robin's affection died, didn't she?...

Why Should You Care?
You gotta watch those folks at DC—just when you start to dismiss a storyline as insignificant in light of the high-stakes drama running through DC's titles today, they find a way not only to revisit those bygone stories, but to make them a crucial part of DC's bigger picture. Apparently the surprises aren't over for the Bat-family!...

DAY OF VENGEANCE #5

Bill Willingham (W); Justiniano & Walden Wong (A)
(DC JUN050358 $2.50)

OMAC PROJECT #5

Greg Rucka (W); Jesus Saiz (A)
(DC JUN050380 $2.50)

RANN THANAGAR WAR #4

Dave Gibbons (W); Ivan Reis & Marc Campos (A)
(DC JUN050383 $2.50)

VILLAINS UNITED #4

Gail Simone (W); Dale Eaglesham & Wade von Grawbadger (A)
(DC JUN050389 $2.50)

DC SPECIAL: THE RETURN OF DONNA TROY #3

Phil Jimenez (W); José Luis Garcia-Lopéz & George Pérez (A)
(DC JUN050359 $2.99)

DC SPECIAL: THE RETURN OF DONNA TROY #4

Phil Jimenez (W); José Luis Garcia-Lopéz & George Pérez (A)
(DC JUN050360 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
The war against the Spectre reaches a turning point... Checkmate struggles to succeed where the JLA failed in their efforts to shut down Brother Eye... The destructive might of Onimar Synn comes to play in the Rann-Thanagar War... the renegade Six set out to rescue one of the DCU's most powerful heroes... and Donna Troy must choose her future as a Titan of myth or a Titan of the DCU.

Why Should You C
When you think that things suspenseful in the DCU, the excitement another notch. T and readers are going to ha crisis of their own if they m voltage tales that pave the w of 2005.

DUSTY STA

Joe Pruett (W); Andrew Robinson
(Image JUN051751 $3.50)
Edgy cyber-western by Joe

What's the Scoop
She's a gun-totin' anti-heroi istic Western world... and yo

Why Should You C
Joe Pruett & Andrew Robinso heroine of the 1990's in an a ture.

G.I. JOE: SN DECLASSIF

Brandon Jerwa (W Santalucia & Jere
(Devil's Due JUN052917 $2.9

What's the Scoop
At long last, the origin of th them all is revealed in this c he? Why'd he become a Joe

Why Should You C
Devil's Due's revamp of the freshness to a comics conce stale over the past four year

HELLSHOCK DEFINITIVE

Jae Lee (W/A)
(Image MAY051533 $19.99)

What's the Scoop
Jae Lee's original horror dra saw completion... until now. pleted the final installment volume, but he's also added quel tale, along with behind taries, sketches, cover art, a

Why Should You C
This is the most personal pr undertaken—and he's pushi a real *tour de force.*

August

Care?
can't possibly get more
ey manage to amp up the
here's a ***Crisis*** coming...
ve to deal with a personal
iss out on these high-
way for the biggest event

R #1

(A)

Pruett & Andrew Robinson
?
ne in a cyberpunk futur-
ou're gonna like her!

Care?
resurrect their cult-fave
ll new full-color adven-

AKE-EYES
IED #1

?); Emiliano
emy Roberts (A)
5)
?
e most popular Joe of
original miniseries Who is
? It's all in here!
Care?
G.I. Joe canon brings
pt that had become a bit
rs.

ED VOL 1

?
na from the 1990's never
Not only has Lee com-
f the series just for this
a never-before-seen pre-
-the-scenes commen-
d other bonus items.

Care?
oject that *Jae Lee* has ever
ng himself to make this

HOUSE OF M #5

Brian Bendis (W); Olivier Coipel (A)
(Marvel JUN051975 $2.99)

HOUSE OF M #6

Brian Bendis (W); Olivier Coipel (A)
(Marvel JUN051976 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Marvel's heroes begin to learn the truth about the changes wrought by the Scarlet Witch... but not all of them want to change things back! And the question still remains: what should be done about the Witch and the threat she poses?

Why Should You Care?
This summertime event continues with a storyline that Marvel promises will echo through the Marvelverse for months to come.

JACK CROSS #1

Warrren Ellis (W); Gary Erskine (A)
(DC JUN050369 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
Meet the one-man solution to a lot of America's problems. Brought in by the National Security Council, Jack Cross is the point man when the US has to take action against threats to America's freedoms. And once he's one the case, he'll do whatever it takes to complete his mission.

Why Should You Care?
Warren Ellis, who's proven his aptitude with high-energy suspense adventure with series such as ***Global Frequency, Reload,*** and ***Red,*** introduces an American James Bond for the 21st Century.

JLA #117

Geoff Johns & Allan Heinberg (W); Chris Batista & Mark Farmer (A)
(DC JUN050372 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
Seeking revenge for what the JLA did to their members in the past, the Secret Society—who now know all the secrets of the JLA—decide to target their loved ones... beginning with Lois Lane. But isn't this the sort of stuff that led to their problems to begin with?...

Why Should You Care?
Geoff Johns & Allan Heinberg continue their riveting tale that bridges the gap between ***Identity Crisis*** and the upcoming ***Infinite Crisis.*** Go ahead and pick it up now, so that you don't have to pay premium prices for it in a few months when you realize just what a turning-point storyline this is!

JUSTICE #1

Alex Ross & Jim Krueger (W); Doug Braithwaite & Alex Ross (A)
(DC JUN050370 $2.99; also available in a double-signed edition (JUN052943 $49.99))

What's the Scoop?
The creative team behind the Earth X saga offers a fresh new look at the classic JLA with this twelve-part painted series that delivers the sort of iconic adventure that has defined DC's flagship super-team in the past. The greatest heroes on Earth against the greatest villains of our time... now *that's* the sort of story JLA fans can appreciate!

Why Should You Care?
The words "All Star" may not appear on the cover, but ***Justice*** is the same sort of accessible-to-all adventure that *Frank Miller & Jim Lee* are delivering in the pages of ***All Star Batman & Robin, the Boy Wonder.*** And just wait 'til you see *Alex Ross's* painted work over *Doug Braithwaite's* pencil art—you'll be trying to peel up the word balloons to see every square inch of the art!

MARVEL 1602: NEW WORLD #1

Greg Pak (W); Greg Tocchini (A)
(Marvel JUN052009 $3.50; also available in a signed edition (JUN052948 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
Greg Pak & Greg Tocchini return to the altered-reality world that *Neil Gaiman* created for a new adventure starring 17th Century versions of the Hulk, Spider-Man, and other Marvel.icons.

Why Should You Care?
Neil Gaiman's Elizabethan reinterpretation of the Marvelverse opened the door for one of the most imaginative altered-reality series in Marvel history—and now he and Marvel are inviting other creators to play in this New World sandbox!

NECROMANCER #1

Joshua Ortega (W); Francis Manapul (A)
(Image JUN051834 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
This new series combines Top Cow's patented form of metaphysical horror-adventure with contemporary teen drama, adding a touch of superhero action for seasoning. The star is Abigail van Alstine, a 17-year-old with a talent for sorcery, a tendency towards self-destruction, and a destiny that's nearly unimaginable.

Why Should You Care?

Top Cow continues the rollout of its next wave original high-profile series with this Vertigo-esque saga that hits all the notes that Top Cow plays so well.

QUEEN BEE HC & SC

Chynna Clugston (W/A)

(Graphix JUN053002 $16.99; JUN053001 $8.99)

What's the Scoop?

The creator of ***Blue Monday*** takes readers back to middle school for this tween-age drama focusing on two psychokinetic girls—one a former geek seeking popularity, the other a manipulator who never misses the chance to embarrass her psychokinetic rival. It's sort of like every middle school on Earth... except for the mutant powers, of course...

Why Should You Care?

Chynna Clugston's skills with characterization and her ability to recapture the pains and joys of school life serve her particularly well in this original graphic novel that may well be her vehicle to young-adult-literature stardom.

REVELATIONS #1 (OF 6)

Paul Jenkins (W); Humberto Ramos (A)

(Dark Horse JUN050013 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

A murder at the Vatican leads a lapsed Catholic detective on a mission to uncover the truth in a place legendary for keeping secrets.

Why Should You Care?

Paul Jenkins & Humberto Ramos, best known for their energetic ***Spectacular Spider-Man*** collaborations, stretch their creative muscles with this intense mystery that has all the trappings of a cinematic blockbuster—but comic readers don't have to wait for the movie!

SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT #1

Michael Turner & J.T. Krul (W); Micah Gunnell (A)

(Aspen JUN052786 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Soulfire mythos continues in this original series that finds Grace's world threatened by a mysterious plague—and it's up to Grace to find the cure.

Why Should You Care?

Not only is *Michael Turner* a super-star artist in his own right, but he also has an amazing skill for discovering and nurturing new talent—and this series, masterminded by Turner, features to work of two of his discoveries: writer *J.T. Krul* and new artist *Micah Gunnell.*

SUPERGIRL #0

Jeph Loeb (W); Ian Churchill & Norm Rapmund (A)

(DC JUN050342 $2.99)

SUPERGIRL #1

Jeph Loeb (W); Ian Churchill & Norm Rapmund (A)

(DC JUN050341 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (JUN052949 $49.99))

What's the Scoop?

Superman's cousin graduates to her own monthly series that's packed with the same exuberant energy as her ***Superman/Batman*** adventures. In her first solo outing, she comes face to face with Power Girl, the heroine who was once thought to be Kal-El's cousin. Before their meeting is over, secrets about both heroines' origins will be revealed! And readers who missed out on the sold-out ***Superman/Batman #20,*** Supergirl's first almost-solo outing, can relax: DC is repackaging that tale as ***Supergirl #0.***

Why Should You Care?

Jeph Loeb's revitalization of the classic Supergirl concept already has legions of avid fans, making this one of the highest-profile new series launches of 2005.

TEEN TITANS #27

Gail Simone (W); Rob Liefeld (A)

(DC JUN050387 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?

Gail Simone & Rob Liefeld sign on as guest creators for a two-parter that pits the Titans against an old enemy of Hawk and Dove who has returned with anger in his heart and a nasty scheme in his mind—and it's up to the Titans to save the day!

Why Should You Care?

Rob Liefeld makes a long-overdue return to the DC Universe—and one look makes it clear that he's still one of the most dynamic artists in comics!

TONY MILLIONAIRE'S LITTLE & LARGE HC

Tony Millionaire (W/A)

(Dark Horse MAY050026 $7.95)

What's the Scoop?

It's two.... two... *two* tales in one! These two distinctively Millionaire-esque all-ages tales ultimately tie together for the happiest of endings—but it's the journey, not the destination, that makes this book so memorable!

Why Should You Care?

Tony Millionaire remains one of the most inimitable storytellers in contemporary comics; give this book a try and see why he's so strongly praised by his fellow creators as well as his many fans.

TOP 10: BEYOND THE FARTHEST PRECINCT #1

Paul DiFilippo (W); Jerry Ordway (A)

(Vertigo/DC JUN050437 $2.99)

TOP 10: THE FORTY NINERS HC

Alan Moore (W); Gene Ha (A)

(ABC/DC MAR050475 $24.99)

What's the Scoop?

One step back, one step forward... First, *Alan Moore & Gene Ha* take readers into the formative days of Neopolis with this tale spotlighting the first officers of Top 10. Then, Sf writer *Paul DiFilippo* makes his comics debut with an original series that picks up five years after the events of the ***Smax*** miniseries.

Why Should You Care?

Moore's Neopolis, a city populated by some of the most powerful heroes and villains the world has ever known, is quite possibly the most promising and thought-provoking of all his ABC creations, as these two works so vividly demonstrate.And artists *Gene Ha* and *Jerry Ordway* bring a classic sf-illustration look to these tales, perfectly complementing the pulpish origins of the Top 10 saga.

TRICKED GN

Alex Robinson (W/A)

(Top Shelf JUN053269 $19.95)

What's the Scoop?

This graphic novel spotlights six disparate individuals - a reclusive rock legend, a heartbroken waitress, a counterfeiter, an obsessive crank, a lost daughter, and a backstabbing lover - whose lives are unconnected until an act of violence brings them together.

Why Should You Care?

Alex Robinson, creator of the masterful ***Box Office Poison,*** complements his skills at characterization with a innovative approach to comics storytelling in this powerful graphic novel.

ULTIMATE FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #1

Mark Millar (W); Jae Lee (A)

(Marvel JUN051987 $3.99)

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #1

Brian Bendis (W); Mark Brooks (A)

(Marvel JUN051989 $3.99)

ULTIMATE X-MEN ANNUAL #1

Brian K. Vaughan (W); Tom Raney (A)

(Marvel JUN051988 $3.99)

ULTIMATES ANNUAL #1

Mark Millar (W); Steve Dillon (A)

(Marvel JUN051990 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

The FF meet the Ultimate Inhumans... Spidey gets a new girlfriend (and it's someone he's met before!)... Ultimate Juggernaut returns... and the Ultimates discover that they're not the only superteam that S.H.I.E.L.D. had assembled!

Why Should You Care?

Back in the bygone days of the Silver Age, extra-length Annuals were a summertime event anticipated by fans everywhere—and now Marvel is hoping to invoke that anticipation and wonder again with these four standalone tales. And rather taking the 1990's B-team-creator approach to annuals, Marvel has brought out some of the big guns to do the honors for these special issues.

WILDSIDERZ #1

J. Scott Campbell & Andy Hartnell (W); J. Scott Campbell (A)

(WildStorm/DC JUN050417 $3.50; also available double-signed (JUN052950 $49.99) and a limited edition lenticular cover version (JUN050418 $75.00))

What's the Scoop?

Five young friends tap into a radical new technology that imbues them with amazing animal powers. So who created this technology, and how did the WildSiderz become the recipients of its power? Find out in this extra-length origin tale!

Why Should You Care?

J. Scott Campbell & Andy Hartnell, the duo responsible for the fan-fave ***Danger Girls***, reunite for this exuberant superteam adventure series.

WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER HEROES OVERSIZED SLIPCASE HC

Paul Dini (W); Alex Ross (A)

(DC MAR050429 $49.99)

What's the Scoop?

The six archetypal superhero tales by *Paul Dini & Alex Ross* are collected in one lavish oversized slipcased edition, complete with promotional art, preliminary sketches and thumbnails, commentary, and more. Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Shazam, the Justice League—they're all in here, in a handsome, durable hardcover.

Why Should You Care?

It's rare that an all-reprint collection makes it onto our Top Two Dozen list—but it's rare that a work of this caliber is presented in such a well-deserved upscale edition. Smaller than the original tabloids but larger than comics size, this edition manages to show off Ross's stunning painted art in a manageable, handsomely designed hardcover compilation that's priced lower than the combined cover price of the six books it reprints!

Check 'Em Out: Books You Should Be Reading

ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL TP

(Fantagraphics JUN052958 $14.95)

Presenting the stories that inspired *Dan Clowes & Terry Zwigoff's* upcoming major motion picture follow-up to ***Ghost World***, along with a scrapbook/screenplay and more.

CARTOON GUIDE TO CHEMISTRY TP

(Harper JUN053437 $16.95)

Larry Gonick, the man responsible for the brilliant ***Cartoon History of the Universe***, joins with *Craig Criddle* to offer a clever, sometimes irreverently informative look at chemistry—and you won't have to balance any equations or calculate any valences!

HISTORY OF VIOLENCE TP

(Vertigo/DC JUL050303 $9.99)

New edition of the suspenseful graphic novel by *John Wagner & Vince Locke*, timed to coincide with the release of the film. A man who thought he had escaped from his violent past learns how wrong he was when his moment in the media spotlight brings old enemies back into his life.

NOBLE CAUSES #13

(Image JUN051795 $3.50)

Meet the Blackthornes. They're the criminal element's answer to the Noble family — rich, powerful, and deeply dysfunctional. In this special 'jump-on' issue, patriarch Hunter Blackthorne has just made parole, and he and his family set into motion a series of events that will shed light on a very dark moment in the Nobles' history. If you like *Kurt Busiek's* ***Astro City***, you'll love. *Jay Faerber's* ***Noble Causes***.

Collected Cool: August's Best Reprint Volumes

DC'S GREATEST IMAGINARY STORIES TP

(DC JUN050361 $19.99)

This trade paperback collects Silver Age classics by *Otto Binder, Bill Finger, Jerry Siegel, Bob Kane, Dick Sprang, Curt Swan* and others. Even before most of us had ever heard of continuity, these stories went beyond the limits of the DC Universe with distinctive reimaginings of classic concepts.

EARTH X HC

(Marvel JUN052052 $49.99)

Timed to coincide with the release of the new *Jim Krueger-Alex Ross-Doug Braithwaite* ***Justice*** series from DC, Marvel offers this massive hardcover compilation of all twelve issues of the Krueger-Ross ***Earth X*** saga, the #0 and #x bookend issues, the 1/2 issue, the Epilogue, and more.

HANK KETCHAM'S COMPLETE DENNIS THE MENACE 1951-1952 HC

(Fantagraphics JUN052962 $24.95)

Fantagraphics follows up its acclaimed ***Peanuts*** collected editions with another comic strip classic. This first volume offers the first two years of the famous strip in a hardcover format that Fantagraphics describes as "like a Big Little Book on steroids."

LULLABY: WISDOM SEEKER VOL 1 TP

(Alias JUN052684 $9.99)

Join Jim Hawkins, Alice (From Wonderland), Pinocchio, Little Red Riding Hood, and the Pied Piper as they join forces to stop a dark magic that has been warping this wonderful world into its own image. This trade paperback collects the sold-out all-ages series by *Mike S. Miller, Ben Avery, & Hector Sevilla.*

MARS IDW SON HC

(IDW JUN053033 $75.00)

MARS IDW TP

(IDW JUN053032 $39.99)

Collecting *Marc Hempel & Mark Wheatley's* ***Mars*** series, complete in one volume and thoroughly recolored, along with 32 additional pages of bonus artwork and extras.

ROBIN ARCHIVES VOL 1 HC

(DC JUN050334 $49.99)

Batman's sidekick graduated to his own solo run in the latter days of the Golden Age, and those rarely-seen tales are featured in this ***Archives*** edition that collects stories from ***Star-Spangled Comics #65-85*** (1947-1948).

RUNAWAYS VOL 1 HC

(Marvel JUN052053 $34.99)

Brian K. Vaughan & Adrian Alphona's series about the children of super-villains, previously available only in hard-to-find original comics editions and digest collections, is compiled in a single hardcover volume that contains all eighteen issues of the first series.

SUPERMAN: FOR TOMORROW VOL 2 HC

(DC MAY050217 $24.99)

The final six issues of the *Brian Azzarello-Jim Lee-Scott Williams* story arc are collected in a handsome hardcover edition.

Read All About It: Must-Have Additions to Your Reference Library

ALTER EGO #51

(TwoMorrows JUN053345 $5.95)

Spotlighting *Lew Swayre Schwartz*, the Golden Age artist who was *Bob Kane's* ghost from 1946 to 1953.

DICK AYERS STORY: AN ILLUSTRATED AUTOBIOGRAPHY VOL 3 GN (OF 3)

(Mecca JUN053065 $17.95)

The final volume in *Dick Ayers'* distinctive comics autobiography.

DRAW COMICS WITH DICK GIORDANO TP

(Impact JUN053454 $19.99)

A guide from the acclaimed illustrator and editor.

WILL EISNER: A RETROSPECTIVE MOCCA LTD HC

(MoCCA JUN053079 $49.95)

Slipcased hardcover, published in conjunction with the Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art's exhibition, surveys Eisner's entire career.

Hot Commodities: August's Hottest Merchandising/Collectibles

BATMAN BLACK WHITE SERIES MINI-STATUE: TIM SALE

(DC Direct FEB050365 $45.00)

Sculpted by *Jonathan Matthews* from designs by *Tim Sale.*

GREEN LANTERN AND GREEN ARROW COLLECTORS' PLATE

(DC Direct FEB050367 $59.99)

Illustrated by by *Alex Ross.*

JUSTICE #1 SUPERMAN VARIANT ACTION FIGURE

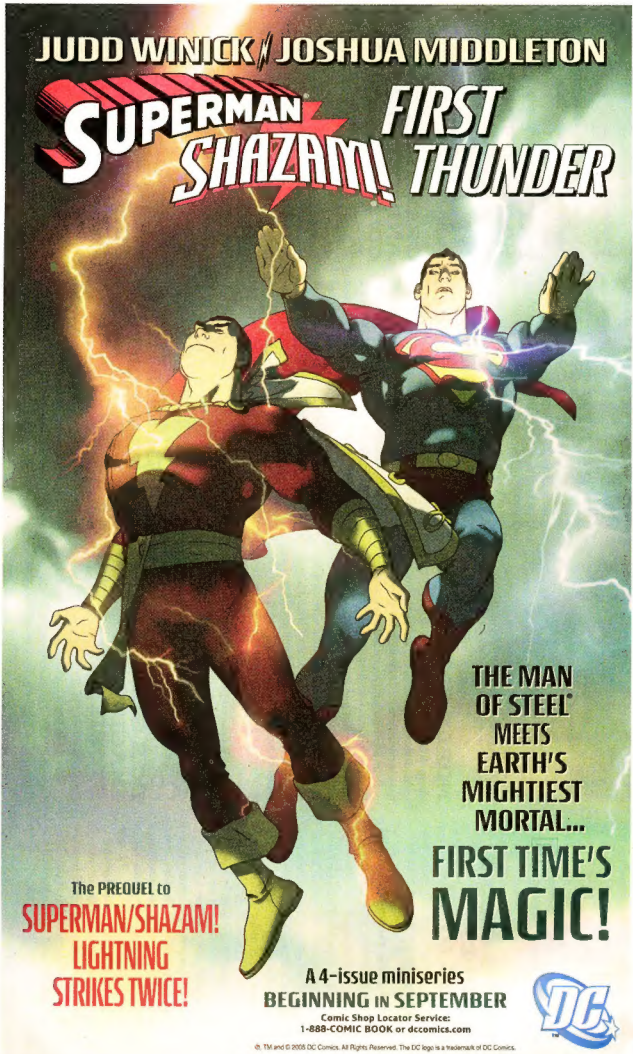
(DC JUN050371 $200.00)

Ultra-limited variant figure featuring a different head sculpt; check with your local comics retailer regarding availability.

THANOS MARVEL SELECT ACTION FIGURE

(Diamond Select MAY052331 $19.99)

Jim Starlin's menacing cosmic megalomaniac gets the upscale Diamond Select action figure treatment.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